Men's Basketball Team Loses 74–69 to Wentworth

By Halder A. Hamoudi

Last Saturday, the men’s basketball team lost 74–69 in a closely contested game against the Wentworth Institute of Technology. Wentworth jumped out to an early 9–4 lead after only three minutes of play. However, the Engineers hung tough, and the lead was never above play. However, the Engineers hung tough, and the lead was never above three until a five-point run back to 46–40. At this point, MIT, led by center Keith Whalen ’96, made a run for the lead. After Whalen and Wentworth guard Larry Walsh traded baskets to make the score 48–42, Engineer guard Randy Huy ’95 hit a three-pointer to cut the lead to three. Whalen made another bucket, and with 13:33 remaining, the Engineers found themselves only one point out of the lead.

Wentworth managed to keep the lead, although it never reached above three until a five-point run with five minutes remaining extending the margin to six. Whalen made the score 53–59 with an impressive drive and layup. Backup guard Mark Milton ’93 then hit a jumper to bring the Wentworth lead to two. The crowd began to cheer on the home team, sensing that with under three minutes remaining, this was going to be the last real chance MIT had to take the lead.

This hope soon became a reality when, following a turnover by WIT, Huy sunk a three-pointer to give the Engineers a 64–63 lead. Unfortunately, Wentworth responded with five unanswered points, allowing it to go ahead by four with under a minute remaining. There was still hope left for the Engineers when Whalen went to the line to shoot two shots and made good on the second. Had MIT been able to play good defense and force a turnover, it was possible to take the lead with a three-point field goal. But the Engineers not only failed to make a good defensive play, they made a rather serious blunder — no defender was in the backcourt. This negligence resulted in a WIT player sprinting to the other end of the court, receiving a lob from his teammate and scoring an easy two.

All of a sudden, the three point lead was back up to five, and a 74–69 defeat was imminent. The game was close on paper, although Wentworth shot considerably better than MIT. As has been the case in the last two games, the Engineers’ free throw percentage was respectable (66.7 percent), but they could have shot better from the three point line (33.3 percent). Whalen led all scorers with an exceptional 27 points, and led all rebounders with 12. Overall, it was an impressive day for Whalen, who also had three steals and only one turnover for the day.

Timothy Porter ’96 did an admirable job replacing injured starters Nikki Carruthers ’95, particularly on defense. Without Carruthers as a scoring threat, it was more difficult for the Engineers to put points on the board. Carruthers, who suffered a dislocated shoulder in last Thursday’s game, is expected to return later this season, although it is doubtful that he will return for the Engineers’ next home game, tonight at 7:30 p.m. against UMass-Boston.

UPCOMING HOME EVENTS

Tuesday, February 9
Men’s Basketball vs. University of Massachusetts at Boston, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 10
Men’s Volleyball vs. Springfield College, 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 11
Men’s Ice Hockey vs. Nichols College, 7 p.m.

Saturday, February 13
Indoor Track vs. U.S. Coast Guard Academy, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, and Williams College, 1 p.m.
Men’s Basketball vs. Western New England College, 2 p.m.
Men’s Ice Hockey vs. Keene State College, 2 p.m.
Women’s Ice Hockey vs. University of Vermont, 7 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, February 13 & 14
Rifle hosts sectional with U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Wentworth Institute of Technology, and Bradnix University.

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